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ABSTRACT

European studies can provide a solution to several of the issues raised in Allan Bloom's "The Closing of the American Mind." European studies pursue the academic quest for what is truth, what is goodness, and what is beauty. In seeking to answer these questions, the Greeks were among the first to explore many of humanity's problems and their legacy had an impact on democracy and the disciplines of history and philosophy. The Romans were heavily influenced by the Greeks but passed on their own contributions to law, government, language, and literature. The English also made significant contributions to these same areas. The most notable French contributions include the writings of Montaigne, Pascal, Moliere, Rousseau, Sartre, and Camus. German influence is seen in music, with great composers such as Bach and Beethoven offering outstanding contributions. Christian orthodoxy also has been a significant force in European culture. Contributions of Thomas Aquinas and Martin Luther show major impacts on the development of religion in Europe. European studies can and should be used as a key component of the search for truth, goodness, and beauty. (AS)

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European Studies as Answer to Allan Bloom's The Closing of the American Mind

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The beginning sentence in Allan Bloom's intriguing best seller The Closing of the American Mind is that there "is one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of: almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative." (Bloom, 1987, p. 25). A few pages later Bloom writes: "... for relativism has extinguished the real motive of education, the search for the good life. Young Americans have less knowledge of and interest in foreign places. In the past there were many students who actually knew something about and loved England, France, Germany, or Italy, for they dreamed of living there or thought their lives would be made more interesting by assimilating their languages and literatures. Such students have almost disappeared, replaced at most by students who are interested in the political problems of Third World countries and in helping them to modernize, with due respect to their cultures, of course. ...No longer is there a hope that there are great wise men in other places and times who can reveal the truth about life--except for the few remaining young people who look for a quick fix from a guru." (p.34).

My bold thesis in this paper is that European Studies, broadly conceived, can (and even should) provide an answer to several of the issues raised in Bloom's book. European Studies is of substantial value in the pursuit of truth. My personal background is the following: I hold the Ph.D. degree with a major in Germanics and a minor in philosophy. I have been a faculty member at Seattle Pacific University for twenty-three years and presently direct the European Studies program there. I adore among numerous other things taking students to Europe, which I did in 1982, 1984, 1987, and plan to do in 1990 and 1991.

Now to the support data for my contention that European Studies can and should be considered answer to Bloom's book. My focus will be exclusively on Western Europe. This is not because there is no value in the literature, philosophy, music, and art of Eastern Europe. However, much of our heritage and many of our traditions are Western European. Western Europe is also considerably more accessible to Americans. Moreover, many of these ideas are simply considered European today, consistent with the spirit of Europe 1992. Lastly, my specialty and love is Western Europe. It is difficult for me to throw that off as I look for the essential Europe. What follows is a sketch in broad strokes of some of the content areas I apprize as of intrinsic value in the pursuit of truth and self-understanding. Most of my emphasis should not surprise or shock you. It is most certainly not new and innovative. But the question before us is

what is true, what is good, what is beautiful. The question is not primarily what is innovative, new, progressive.

Greece

The Greeks were among the first to explore many of the problems that continue to concern human persons to this day. The Greeks were the first to strive to understand, in a logical, rational way, the universe and the positions of human persons in it. Athenian democracy is one of the cornerstones of Western civilization. It demonstrated that a large group of people, not just a few, could efficiently run the affairs of state. In Athens, the citizens were the government. It is this union of the individual and the state, the view that the state exists for the good of the citizen and that it is the duty of the citizen to serve it well, that made Athenian democracy so compelling. Between the years 500-338 B.C. Greek civilization reached its highest peak in politics, thought, and art. Subsequently, they turned their weapons on one another, destroying their civilization in a century of warfare. Some of the Greeks recorded these events, and began to analyze them. This process is said to be the creation of the academic discipline of history. This era also saw the flowering of philosophy, as Greek thinkers began to ponder the meaning of the universe. I tend to agree with Alfred North Whitehead that philosophy is to a great extent a footnote to Plato.

Rome

The Romans admitted that in matters of art, literature, philosophy, and ways of living, they learned from the Greeks. Their great achievement lay in the ability not only to conquer peoples, but also to incorporate them into the Roman system. If the Greek genius shines most brightly in art, science, philosophy, and, in general, the things of the intellect and the imagination, the Roman genius shines in the realm of law and government.

Rome's achievement was not limited to the ancient world. Rome's law, language, and administrative practices were inherited by medieval and modern Europe. London, Paris, Vienna, and numerous other cities began as Roman colonies or military camps. Each city was a center for the propagation of Roman government, language, and customs and was closely connected with the city of Rome itself by a well-planned system of roads and harbors.

Roman law began as a set of rules that regulated the lives of the citizens. It is one of the splendid Roman achievements. The essence of the law was to protect life, property, and the reputation of the citizens. As the Romans came into contact with foreigners, they devised laws to deal with situations between Romans and foreigners, and between foreigners under Roman jurisdiction. By dealing with specific, concrete circumstances, the Romans developed a body of law which laid the foundation for a universal conception of law. Roman law has left its mark on the legal and political systems of Europe. Moreover, roads, aqueducts, bridges, and buildings stand as reminders of the great achievement of Rome. For almost two thousand years the Latin language and literature formed the core of all education in the West.

England

"You ask, what is our aim: I can answer in one word: Victory--victory at all costs...for without victory there is no survival. Let that be realized, no survival for the British Empire; no survival of all that the British Empire has stood for..." Sir Winston Churchill

Tea. Tea has numerous functions and meanings in England. It is a customary remedy for exhaustion, boredom, rain, sun. It is usually served strong and milky. High tea about four in the afternoon often includes meats, sandwiches, shortbread, crumpets, scones, and more. Tea is sometimes listed as one of the great achievements of English society.

Magna Carta. King John (1199-1216) antagonized the English people, high and low, by his high-handed tyranny and treachery. Magna Carta's 63 articles dealt with immediate specific grievances rather than generalizations about the freedom of the people. One article recognized the freedom of the Church. Another promised townsmen their traditional "liberties and free customs." One famous clause stated that "no freeman shall be seized or imprisoned or dispossessed or outlawed or banished or in any way injured...except by the legal judgment of his peers or by the law of the land." Some of these provisions have been embodied in later documents, including the

first amendments to the United States Constitution. In retrospect, it is apparent that the most important effect of Magna Carta was to show that the king was not above the law, thus discouraging development of a absolute monarchy such as later appeared in other European countries. The growth of many of the liberties of English-speaking people began with the adoption of this Great Charter.

Parliament. One of the strengths of British democracy is the fact that its institutions of representative government have "just grown" bit by bit over long periods of time rather than being imposed by fiat from above or violent revolution from below. This slow growth has meant that each innovation became an organic part of national life before the next step was taken. Bit by bit Parliament obtained four classes of powers: No new taxes could be imposed or collected without its consent; no new laws could be adopted without its agreement; it could impeach the kings's ministers, and it could press upon the king its advice in all significant matters of government.

Monarchy. All over the world, people watch Great Britain's Royal Family with much interest. Admittedly, some think monarchy is outdated and impractical. They see no justification for the money spent on British royalty each year. However, a significant majority feels differently.

Great Britain is a constitutional monarchy. The queen reigns, but she does not rule. The Cabinet of government officials, call ministers, actually rules Britain. The monarchy in Britain is over 1000 years old. The Queen can trace her ancestry back to England's earliest kings in the 800's. The throne passes from a king to his oldest son. If the king has no son, his oldest daughter inherits the throne.

For hundreds of years, the monarch held most of the authority in England. But as Parliaments's power grew, the monarch's power declined. Today the monarch makes few decisions on her own. Yet the powers of government are still referred to as her powers, and are used by her ministers, and her Parliament. The British call their government Her Majesty's Government. The monarch must belong to the Church of England, and is its head.

The queen approves all bills passed by Parliament before they can become laws. Although in theory she could reject a bill, no monarch has done so since the early 1700's. The queen appoints all British judges on the advice of the Government. Judges serve for life or until they retire, and thus they are free from political pressures.

Monarchy adds to our lives in ways that tug at the romantic in each person. Ceremonial splendor and pageantry, pomp and circumstance, the jewels and the crown, uniformed guards, groomed horses, and most important the queen, the princes and princesses--all this and more points in the direction of Heaven and Joy, and it is good. God save the Queen!

The function of monarchy may seem to be largely ceremonial. However, let it be remembered that Elizabeth meets weekly in private meetings with the prime minister. She consults, encourages, and warns. Moreover, and more significant, the grace and dignity with which she performs her duties provides us all a link with the past and a hope for the future. Monarchy ranks as one of England's greatest and most lasting accomplishments. Let it be reiterated: May God save the Queen!

(Shakespeare). There is a wealth of knowledge and pleasure to be gained by the careful study of Shakespeare, but I have no time to develop my ideas on Shakespeare for this paper. His mention must suffice to conjure up the bountiful support data which exists.

France

The Arts of Civilization. "The arts of civilization" is a phrase which is often used to describe the French contribution to Western civilization. The expression can be defined as a concern for and an interest in good manners, appropriate language, things of the mind, a certain elegance--all resulting in the French idea of forme, i.e. balance and equilibrium in all aspects of life, clearness and beauty of the whole. French literature, the presentation of thoughts, meanings and values in written form, is perhaps the most lasting and original contribution of the French to the Western world.

With the above in mind, and if I had the time to develop my ideas, the writers who would receive my particular attention would be Montaigne, Pascal, Moliere, Rousseau, Sartre, and Camus.

Germany

Heavenly music. In the area of music, the Germans have achieved unusual prominence. The wonderful world of music would be substantially diminished without Heinrich Schuetz, Johann Sebastian Bach, George Frideric Handel, Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Felix Mendelssohn, Johannes Brahms, Richard Wagner, Gustav Mahler, Johann Strauss, Richard Strauss, and Arnold Schoenberg. I am selecting Bach and Beethoven as point of illustration.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was the greatest member of the most important musical family in history. Bach was a devout Lutheran who spent much of his life in the service of the church. He wrote more than 1000 works, nearly three-quarter of which were intended to be performed at Christian worship. It is claimed that choral works like the "Mass in B Minor" and the "Saint Matthew Passion" prove, through their music alone, the existence of a Higher Power. Upon listening to Bach, some have an experience similar to the one Handel is said to have had after the composition of the Hallelujah Chorus of "The Messiah": "I thought I saw all Heaven before me and the great God Himself."

A clear logic underlies Bach's work, which is one reason why he is so often favored by mathematicians and scientists. But his music also throbs with a living pulse, which may explain why Bach is also so popular with young adults. Bach's power of expression seems to be generated by a dynamic balance between both sides of his creative faculty. His is full measure of head and heart, the unity of the intellect and the emotions. Order and spirit seem to be the twin pillars of Bach's greatness and enduring appeal. We have said that the history of philosophy consists of a series of footnotes to Plato. It might also be argued that music since the last half of the 17th century has consisted of a series of variations on Bach.

Ludwig van Beethoven. Beethoven was born 1770 in Bonn. He was no prodigy child, like Mozart before him. In school he was slow, shy, and reserved. His music was to become his whole life. At 13 years of age, Ludwig received a permanent position as violinist in the court orchestra. There he heard the full resonance of Mozart's heavenly music. In the court theater Beethoven also saw, for the first time, the aristocratic world of the nobility--the ladies and gentlemen of the court. He saw beautiful rooms, long halls, portraits of monarchs and princesses, innumerable candles, mirrors, and beautiful carpets.

In the spring of 1787 Beethoven journeyed to Vienna to visit and play for the great Mozart. The details of the meeting are heaped with conjecture. It is said that, at one point, he begged Mozart to give him a theme for improvisation. After listening to Beethoven play, Mozart is said to have noted: "Keep your eyes on him; he will give the world something to talk about."

In 1792, Beethoven returned to Vienna to stay permanently. At that time forces were being unleashed in France which were ill-disposed toward the nobility. The rule of the King and the aristocracy in France came to a bloody end. Beethoven was most definitely enthused about the ideals of freedom, equality, and fraternity.

Beethoven had an unusual gift of improvisation. Almost all of his early works arose from improvisations. There were those who were more polished, but perhaps no musician can compare with Beethoven's power, intensity of feeling, and imagination.

By 1801 it is clear that Beethoven's sense of hearing had greatly deteriorated. By 1804, he was deemed peculiar by all who were to encounter him, the effects of this progressive loss of hearing. He began to live principally in his music.

In the end, Beethoven became more and more reclusive. He seldom showed himself in the streets of Vienna, and passersby would turn their heads in surprise when a man hurried by in a long, shabby, green coat, pockets bulging with ear trumpet and notebook. For the most part, Beethoven stayed in his room, absorbed in his music. The more active, clear, and purposeful this inward world of music, the more disordered became his everyday life. He was subsequently arrested as a common tramp.

In 1823 the Ninth Symphony, one of the great masterpieces of all art, became his sole concern. For the last time, the everyday was cast aside for timeless imaginings. The world of jarring disharmony was shaken off in order that another world--pure, sane, clear, far-visioned--might be realized. When Beethoven turned to music, conflict was elevated and hostility, in the end, dropped away. The fourth movement of the Ninth Symphony is just what Beethoven meant it to be. Beethoven captures in tone one of the noblest aspirations of the human spirit: joy!

Alexander Solzhenitsyn in his 1978 Harvard Address said that "Hastiness and superficiality are the psychic disease of the 20th century", ...that the "human soul longs for things higher, warmer and purer than those offered by today's mass living habits, introduced by ...intolerable music." Most certainly many of the achievements of Bach and Beethoven should be listed with the things "higher, warmer, purer", great art which uplifts the soul. The music of Bach and Beethoven expresses much of the farthest reaches of the human spirit. Perhaps that which a poet like Shakespeare can express in words has been represented in music by Bach and Beethoven.

Nazi Germany: Hell of Earth. The rise of Nazism in 20th century Germany is an exceedingly disturbing chapter in the history of Western civilization. This development makes it virtually impossible to affirm the idea of "progress," and forces us to go back to the basics as it relates to the metaphysical and ethical questions of who we are, and what are our obligations and responsibilities to persons. Nazi Germany should be thoroughly studies, "dass wir nie vergessen" as we are reminded at Dachau.

Christian Orthodoxy and Europe

T. S. Eliot has said that the "dominant force in creating a common culture between peoples each of which has its distinct culture, is religion. ...It is in Christianity that our arts have developed; it is in Christianity that the laws of Europe have--until recently--been rooted. It is against a background of Christianity that all our thought has significance." (Eliot, 1940, p. 200). Thus, orthodoxy, broadly conceived, can and should play a major role in European Studies programs. I will focus briefly on the significance of Aquinas and Luther.

Aquinas. Thomas Aquinas, the greatest theologian of the Middle Ages, and one of the greatest of all time, was born near the ancient city of Aquino, between Rome and Naples. He is called the Angelic Doctor, and ranks with Augustine in importance.

Aquinas' method of solving the "problem" of culture (human achievement in the world of values--art, political systems, philosophy, psychology, civilization) has become the standard for numerous Christians. In Thomas' synthesis, all these institutions are organically related to each other. The study of the humblest fact will lead to the study of the highest truth. While each serves a particular end, each also serves the others.

Thomas distinguished carefully between philosophy and theology. They are two independent "sciences," he argued, two distinct modes of knowing. Reason is granted its own integrity and authority. However, natural reason will be able to know nothing of these "mysteries of faith" which are necessary to eternal beatitude. The existence of God as a Holy Trinity, the incarnation of God the Son in Jesus Christ, the redemption of the world through Jesus, the resurrection of the body and the Last Judgment, these are truths given to us through the canonical Scriptures.

Aquinas, therefore, contended that there is no conflict between faith and reason. It is the very essence of the Thomist teaching that Reason and common sense can be trusted. Much truth can be reached by a rational process, if only the process is rational enough. He concluded that philosophy is based on reason, and theology on the revealed word of God. For him, faith rests on a rational foundation, and philosophy does not conflict with Christianity.

Luther. Martin Luther is one of the few persons of whom it may be said that the history of the world was profoundly altered by his work. Today he is widely honored also in Catholic circles as a worthy partner in orthodox dialogue. Some of the reforms that the Roman Catholic Church put into effect during the 1960's recall points Luther made earlier, as, for example, the use of the language of the people for worship, rather than Latin.

One of Luther's most important contributions to Protestant thought was his vindication of ordinary life in the world as the best field for the service of God, rather than monastic-ascetic flight from the world. Luther affirmed the essential goodness of the normal trades and occupations of life, and denounced those who define good works so narrowly that they are made to consist only of praying in church, fasting, and almsgiving.

Luther has little of the faith in reason that we find in Thomas Aquinas. Luther often railed at reason. But do not mistake his meaning. Reason, in the sense of logic, was employed by Luther to the uttermost limits. Here Luther is in substantial agreement with Thomas. Often, Luther asked to be instructed from Scripture and reason. What he was opposed to was reason in the sense of "common sense". In calm confidence, Luther presented the paradox of Christian existence: A Christian is a free lord of all, subject to none; a Christian is a servant of all, subject

to all. Luther did not trust the way persons ordinarily behave, feel, and think. It is at this point that Luther's thought contrasts so sharply with St. Thomas'.

In this paper I have selected as particularly worthy of mention in European Studies programs Plato, Roman law, the Magna Carta, Parliament, monarchy, Shakespeare, the French understanding of "arts of civilization," Bach, Beethoven, Nazi Germany, and Christian orthodoxy. Among other concepts untouched in my sketch but worthy of emphasis are Greek and Roman architecture and sculpture, Gothic architecture (Chartre cathedral), the Italian Renaissance, the Golden Age of Spain, European painting, and Michelangelo.

In summary, my thesis is that European Studies can (and even should) be used as a key component of the search for truth, goodness, and beauty. European Studies is a very good answer indeed to The Closing of the American Mind.

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Now to the support data for my contention that European Studies can and should be considered answer to Bloom's book. My focus will be exclusively on Western Europe. This is not because there is no value in the literature, philosophy, music, and art of Eastern Europe. However, much of our heritage and many of our traditions are Western European. Western Europe is also considerably more accessible to Americans. Moreover, many of these ideas are simply considered European today, consistent with the spirit of Europe 1992. Lastly, my specialty and love is Western Europe. It is difficult for me to throw that off as I look for the essential Europe. What follows is a sketch in broad strokes of some of the content areas I apprize as of intrinsic value in the pursuit of truth and self-understanding. Most of my emphasis should not surprise or shock you. It is most certainly not new and innovative. But the question before us is

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Greece

The Greeks were among the first to explore many of the problems that continue to concern human persons to this day. The Greeks were the first to strive to understand, in a logical, rational way, the universe and the positions of human persons in it. Athenian democracy is one of the cornerstones of Western civilization. It demonstrated that a large group of people, not just a few, could efficiently run the affairs of state. In Athens, the citizens were the government. It is this union of the individual and the state, the view that the state exists for the good of the citizen and that it is the duty of the citizen to serve it well, that made Athenian democracy so compelling. Between the years 500-338 B.C. Greek civilization reached its highest peak in politics, thought, and art. Subsequently, they turned their weapons on one another, destroying their civilization in a century of warfare. Some of the Greeks recorded these events, and began to analyze them. This process is said to be the creation of the academic discipline of history. This era also saw the flowering of philosophy, as Greek thinkers began to ponder the meaning of the universe. I tend to agree with Alfred North Whitehead that philosophy is to a great extent a footnote to Plato.

Rome

The Romans admitted that in matters of art, literature, philosophy, and ways of living, they learned from the Greeks. Their great achievement lay in the ability not only to conquer peoples, but also to incorporate them into the Roman system. If the Greek genius shines most brightly in art, science, philosophy, and, in general, the things of the intellect and the imagination, the Roman genius shines in the realm of law and government.

Rome's achievement was not limited to the ancient world. Rome's law, language, and administrative practices were inherited by medieval and modern Europe. London, Paris, Vienna, and numerous other cities began as Roman colonies or military camps. Each city was a center for the propagation of Roman government, language, and customs and was closely connected with the city of Rome itself by a well-planned system of roads and harbors.

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"You ask, what is our aim: I can answer in one word: Victory--victory at all costs...for without victory there is no survival. Let that be realized, no survival for the British Empire; no survival of all that the British Empire has stood for..." Sir Winston Churchill

Tea. Tea has numerous functions and meanings in England. It is a customary remedy for exhaustion, boredom, rain, sun. It is usually served strong and milky. High tea about four in the afternoon often includes meats, sandwiches, shortbread, crumpets, scones, and more. Tea is sometimes listed as one of the great achievements of English society.

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Germany

Heavenly music. In the area of music, the Germans have achieved unusual prominence. The wonderful world of music would be substantially diminished without Heinrich Schuetz, Johann Sebastian Bach, George Frideric Handel, Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Felix Mendelssohn, Johannes Brahms, Richard Wagner, Gustav Mahler, Johann Strauss, Richard Strauss, and Arnold Schoenberg. I am selecting Bach and Beethoven as point of illustration.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was the greatest member of the most important musical family in history. Bach was a devout Lutheran who spent much of his life in the service of the church. He wrote more than 1000 works, nearly three-quarter of which were intended to be performed at Christian worship. It is claimed that choral works like the "Mass in B Minor" and the "Saint Matthew Passion" prove, through their music alone, the existence of a Higher Power. Upon listening to Bach, some have an experience similar to the one Handel is said to have had after the composition of the Hallelujah Chorus of "The Messiah": "I thought I saw all Heaven before me and the great God Himself."

A clear logic underlies Bach's work, which is one reason why he is so often favored by mathematicians and scientists. But his music also throbs with a living pulse, which may explain why Bach is also so popular with young adults. Bach's power of expression seems to be generated by a dynamic balance between both sides of his creative faculty. His is full measure of head and heart, the unity of the intellect and the emotions. Order and spirit seem to be the twin pillars of Bach's greatness and enduring appeal. We have said that the history of philosophy consists of a series of footnotes to Plato. It might also be argued that music since the last half of the 17th century has consisted of a series of variations on Bach.

Ludwig van Beethoven. Beethoven was born 1770 in Bonn. He was no prodigy child, like Mozart before him. In school he was slow, shy, and reserved. His music was to become his whole life. At 13 years of age, Ludwig received a permanent position as violinist in the court orchestra. There he heard the full resonance of Mozart's heavenly music. In the court theater Beethoven also saw, for the first time, the aristocratic world of the nobility--the ladies and gentlemen of the court. He saw beautiful rooms, long halls, portraits of monarchs and princesses, innumerable candles, mirrors, and beautiful carpets.

In the spring of 1787 Beethoven journeyed to Vienna to visit and play for the great Mozart. The details of the meeting are heaped with conjecture. It is said that, at one point, he begged Mozart to give him a theme for improvisation. After listening to Beethoven play, Mozart is said to have noted: "Keep your eyes on him; he will give the world something to talk about."

In 1792, Beethoven returned to Vienna to stay permanently. At that time forces were being unleashed in France which were ill-disposed toward the nobility. The rule of the King and the aristocracy in France came to a bloody end. Beethoven was most definitely enthused about the ideals of freedom, equality, and fraternity.

Beethoven had an unusual gift of improvisation. Almost all of his early works arose from improvisations. There were those who were more polished, but perhaps no musician can compare with Beethoven's power, intensity of feeling, and imagination.

By 1801 it is clear that Beethoven's sense of hearing had greatly deteriorated. By 1804, he was deemed peculiar by all who were to encounter him, the effects of this progressive loss of hearing. He began to live principally in his music.

In the end, Beethoven became more and more reclusive. He seldom showed himself in the streets of Vienna, and passersby would turn their heads in surprise when a man hurried by in a long, shabby, green coat, pockets bulging with ear trumpet and notebook. For the most part, Beethoven stayed in his room, absorbed in his music. The more active, clear, and purposeful this inward world of music, the more disordered became his everyday life. He was subsequently arrested as a common tramp.

In 1823 the Ninth Symphony, one of the great masterpieces of all art, became his sole concern. For the last time, the everyday was cast aside for timeless imaginings. The world of jarring disharmony was shaken off in order that another world--pure, sane, clear, far-visioned--might be realized. When Beethoven turned to music, conflict was elevated and hostility, in the end, dropped away. The fourth movement of the Ninth Symphony is just what Beethoven meant it to be. Beethoven captures in tone one of the noblest aspirations of the human spirit: joy!

Alexander Solzhenitsyn in his 1978 Harvard Address said that "Hastiness and superficiality are the psychic disease of the 20th century", ...that the "human soul longs for things higher, warmer and purer than those offered by today's mass living habits, introduced by ...intolerable music." Most certainly many of the achievements of Bach and Beethoven should be listed with the things "higher, warmer, purer", great art which uplifts the soul. The music of Bach and Beethoven expresses much of the farthest reaches of the human spirit. Perhaps that which a poet like Shakespeare can express in words has been represented in music by Bach and Beethoven.

Nazi Germany: Hell of Earth. The rise of Nazism in 20th century Germany is an exceedingly disturbing chapter in the history of Western civilization. This development makes it virtually impossible to affirm the idea of "progress," and forces us to go back to the basics as it relates to the metaphysical and ethical questions of who we are, and what are our obligations and responsibilities to persons. Nazi Germany should be thoroughly studies, "dass wir nie vergessen" as we are reminded at Dachau.

Christian Orthodoxy and Europe

T. S. Eliot has said that the "dominant force in creating a common culture between peoples each of which has its distinct culture, is religion. ...It is in Christianity that our arts have developed; it is in Christianity that the laws of Europe have--until recently--been rooted. It is against a background of Christianity that all our thought has significance." (Eliot, 1940, p. 200). Thus, orthodoxy, broadly conceived, can and should play a major role in European Studies programs. I will focus briefly on the significance of Aquinas and Luther.

Aquinas. Thomas Aquinas, the greatest theologian of the Middle Ages, and one of the greatest of all time, was born near the ancient city of Aquino, between Rome and Naples. He is called the Angelic Doctor, and ranks with Augustine in importance.

Aquinas' method of solving the "problem" of culture (human achievement in the world of values--art, political systems, philosophy, psychology, civilization) has become the standard for numerous Christians. In Thomas' synthesis, all these institutions are organically related to each other. The study of the humblest fact will lead to the study of the highest truth. While each serves a particular end, each also serves the others.

Thomas distinguished carefully between philosophy and theology. They are two independent "sciences," he argued, two distinct modes of knowing. Reason is granted its own integrity and authority. However, natural reason will be able to know nothing of these "mysteries of faith" which are necessary to eternal beatitude. The existence of God as a Holy Trinity, the incarnation of God the Son in Jesus Christ, the redemption of the world through Jesus, the resurrection of the body and the Last Judgment, these are truths given to us through the canonical Scriptures.

Aquinas, therefore, contended that there is no conflict between faith and reason. It is the very essence of the Thomist teaching that Reason and common sense can be trusted. Much truth can be reached by a rational process, if only the process is rational enough. He concluded that philosophy is based on reason, and theology on the revealed word of God. For him, faith rests on a rational foundation, and philosophy does not conflict with Christianity.

Luther. Martin Luther is one of the few persons of whom it may be said that the history of the world was profoundly altered by his work. Today he is widely honored also in Catholic circles as a worthy partner in orthodox dialogue. Some of the reforms that the Roman Catholic Church put into effect during the 1960's recall points Luther made earlier, as, for example, the use of the language of the people for worship, rather than Latin.

One of Luther's most important contributions to Protestant thought was his vindication of ordinary life in the world as the best field for the service of God, rather than monastic-ascetic flight from the world. Luther affirmed the essential goodness of the normal trades and occupations of life, and denounced those who define good works so narrowly that they are made to consist only of praying in church, fasting, and almsgiving.

Luther has little of the faith in reason that we find in Thomas Aquinas. Luther often railed at reason. But do not mistake his meaning. Reason, in the sense of logic, was employed by Luther to the uttermost limits. Here Luther is in substantial agreement with Thomas. Often, Luther asked to be instructed from Scripture and reason. What he was opposed to was reason in the sense of "common sense". In calm confidence, Luther presented the paradox of Christian existence: A Christian is a free lord of all, subject to none; a Christian is a servant of all, subject

to all. Luther did not trust the way persons ordinarily behave, feel, and think. It is at this point that Luther's thought contrasts so sharply with St. Thomas'.

In this paper I have selected as particularly worthy of mention in European Studies programs Plato, Roman law, the Magna Carta, Parliament, monarchy, Shakespeare, the French understanding of "arts of civilization," Bach, Beethoven, Nazi Germany, and Christian orthodoxy. Among other concepts untouched in my sketch but worthy of emphasis are Greek and Roman architecture and sculpture, Gothic architecture (Chartre cathedral), the Italian Renaissance, the Golden Age of Spain, European painting, and Michelangelo.

In summary, my thesis is that European Studies can (and even should) be used as a key component of the search for truth, goodness, and beauty. European Studies is a very good answer indeed to The Closing of the American Mind.

Works Cited

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